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METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR SCHEDULING BROADCAST INFORMATION

Cross Reference to Co-Pending Applications

This application is related to U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/193, 394 filed April 16, 1999, entitled "A Broadband Data Broadcast Service", U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/199, filed Nov. 8, 200, entitled "Error Correction with Limited Working Store", U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/511,791, filed May 16, 2000, entitled "Maintaining Information Variety in an Information Receiving System", which are all assigned to the assignee of the present invention and are all incorporated herein by reference.

Background of the Invention

The present invention relates to mechanisms for scheduling broadcast information, and more particularly, to mechanisms for maintaining variety and/or timeliness of the information in a scheduled broadcast stream.

Information systems allow a wide variety of information to be transmitted to individual consumers of information. A typical information system includes an information transmitter and one or more information receiver systems. The information receiver systems receive the information transmitted by the information transmitter, and provide the information to the consumer. Such an information system may be based on over-the-air transmissions, satellite transmissions, wire-based transmissions including cable, fiber-optic transmissions, or any other type of information transmission medium.

For most systems, there is a large amount of information that is available for broadcast. The information may take the form of news stories, entertainment programming, software, etc. Each of these general categories of information often have multiple sub-categories. For example, news stories may have local, national and international sub-categories, each covering a wide variety of topical categories such as sports, business, recreation, etc. Each topical category may have further sub-categories. For example, the sports topical category may have sub-categories of baseball, football, soccer, hockey, etc. As can be seen, there can be a wide variety of information that is available for broadcast.

Compounding the amount of information that is available for broadcast is the